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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to begin the process of determining the preferences of coaches and/or teams for attending specific national debate tournaments. Ninety-six respondents participated in the study either through an oral survey or a follow-up questionnaire administered at two different national tournaments. The subjects included the directors of forensics, the coach in attendance, and five students unaccompanied by a coach. Respondents provided factors influencing their decisions to attend particular national tournaments which were grouped into 10 reasons: manner of qualification, availability of funding, quality of the tournament, tradition of attending the tournament, location of the tournament, professional affiliation of the coach or program, educational value of participating in the tournament, preference of the students involved, time when the tournament was held, and enjoyment of the coach and students when attending the tournament. Conclusions suggested that while the national tournaments sponsored by forensic honorary organizations ranked second most preferred, the reasons why they might be preferred (tradition, professional affiliation of the coach and/or program, educational value, preference of the student, and enjoyment) were not among the reasons identified. (Twelve tables of data are included.) (Author/MG)

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NATIONAL FORENSIC HONORARY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE "NATIONAL" TOURNAMENTS: HOW DO THEY RELATE?

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Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association's 75th National Convention held in San Francisco, California, November 18-21, 1989.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relationship of the national forensic honorary organizations (Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, and Phi Rho Pi) to the following national tournaments: The American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament; the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals; the American Forensic Association's National Debate Tournament; the Cross-Examination Debate Association's National Tournament; and the Interstate Oratory Contest. Respondents provided factors influencing their decisions to attend particular national tournaments, which were subsequently grouped into the following ten reasons: The manner in which a student qualified to participate; the availability of funding; the quality of the tournament; the tradition of attending the tournament; the location of the tournament; the professional affiliation of the coach and/or program; the educational value of participating at the tournament; the preference of the students involved; the time when the tournament was held; and the enjoyment of the coach and/or students when attending the tournament. The data for the study were drawn from responses to a survey administered at the 1989 AFA-NIET held in Fargo, North Dakota. The conclusions suggested while the national tournaments sponsored by forensic honorary organizations ranked second most preferred, the reasons why they might be preferred (tradition, professional affiliation of the coach and/or program, educational value, preference of the student, and enjoyment) were not among the reasons identified.

NATIONAL FORENSIC HONORARY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE "NATIONAL" TOURNAMENTS: HOW DO THE TWO RELATE?

The national honorary forensic organizations (Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, and Phi Rho Pi) and the dominant national forensic organizations currently sponsoring national tournaments (the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament Committee, the American Forensic Association's National Debate Tournament Committee, the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals Tournament Committee, the Cross Examination Debate Association's National Tournament Committee, and the Interstate Oratory Contest's Executive Committee) have chronicled the development of their national contests in individual events and debate (Faules & Rieke, 1968; Faules, Rieke, & Rhodes, 1976; Schnoor, 1984; and Norton, 1987). From Sellnow's "A Condensed Chronology of American Forensics" (1989), the year each national tournament began suggests that the national honorary forensic organizations were the first (excluding the Interstate Oratory group which sponsored--and still does--a single-event national contest) to host national tournaments in both individual events and debate.

One possible reason for this leadership in the area of offering national tournaments may have stemmed from the notion that the honoraries were the only groups at the time with constitutions and the inherent structures capable of offering and managing national tournaments. Also, the fraternal nature of

these honoraries may have served to draw participating schools together for the camaraderie, as much as for the competition (Norton, 1987). Schools participated in the nationals if they were members. If a school did not hold a membership in one of the honorary organizations, that school did not participate at a national tournament. Due to the fraternal nature of the honorary organizations, schools could only affiliate with one national group.

This caused anxiety for program directors not wishing to affiliate with an honorary organization or wishing to compete nationally against schools from the rival organizations. In addition, with the growth of the American Forensic Association, other national tournaments were being introduced. The National Debate Tournament had its origins at West Point in 1947. Later, to reverse what some considered to be an undesirable direction for the NDT, the CEDA nationals were born. In response to the absence of a national tournament for individual events, the NFA introduced its national tournament in 1970. Several years later, the AFA responded with its own NIET. Through all of this, the Interstate Oratory Contest continued to function, largely due to the leadership of its executive committees.

The effect of the diffusion of the other national tournaments on the forensic honoraries was to reduce their influence. No longer were their nationals the only ones in which students from across the country could compete. Their nationals became somewhat secondary because of their apparent exclusiveness

based upon membership.

Today, the national tournaments sponsored by the honoraries and the national tournaments run by the forensic organizations coexist. Attendance at these tournaments is often based upon specific concerns or attitudes held by coaches and students. Over the years, quite spirited debates have taken place regarding the supremacy of one national tournament over another. Added to this, some individuals have cast as a group the national tournaments sponsored by honoraries into a clearly second rate position (in terms of quality, format, and/or attendance).

Each of the national tournaments (including those of the honoraries) is unique and has certain attributes that attract or repel forensic coaches and students. However, little if any research has been conducted to determine the basis for attendance preferences for national individual events and debate tournaments. In the absence of other research efforts, the following research questions emerge:

(1) How do program directors prioritize the existing national debate and/or individual events tournaments which they attend?

(2) What factors influence the choices made by program directors when deciding which national debate and/or individual events tournaments to attend?

This study is an effort to begin the process of determining the preferences of coaches and/or teams for attending specific national tournaments. In doing so, some suggestions regarding

the relationship between the national honoraries and the national tournaments may result.

METHOD

Instrument

In an effort to determine the preferences of coaches or teams, a survey instrument was tested at the 1989 Pi Kappa Delta National Convention and Tournament held in St. Louis, Missouri. The survey asked the respondents to identify the national tournaments which their schools would attend during the 1988-89 academic year. Respondents were also asked to prioritize these tournaments and to provide the reasons or criteria they used to select these tournaments. Of the surveys distributed to the nearly 100 schools in attendance, 60 surveys were returned. The results suggested that the instrument could work to identify preferences and reasons for attending national tournaments. With validity suggested, plans were made to use the instrument at the 1989 AFA-NIET to identify attendance patterns within that group of the forensic community. However, as a modification from the initial testing of the instrument, the investigator chose to administer the survey orally during the registration period at the AFA-NIET.

Subjects

Of the 116 schools in attendance at the 1989 AFA-NIET, 96 respondents participated in the study either orally or through a follow-up questionnaire which was sent to forensic directors from participating schools who for some reason were not interviewed

while at the tournament. With a response rate of approximately 83 percent, the subjects included the Directors of Forensics, the coach in attendance, and five students unaccompanied by a coach.

Procedure

Cross tabulation tables using a two-way frequency were developed to sort the data. The SAS PROC FREQ was used to tabulate all data (SAS User's Guide, 1985).

THE PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Initially, the respondents were asked to prioritize the national tournaments their schools had attended or would attend during the 1989 academic year (1 = first preference; 2 = next preference; etc.) Six national tournaments were identified (AFA-NIET, the honoraries, CEDA, NFA's IE Nationals, Interstate Oratory, and the NDT). The honorary organizations were grouped together because schools can only participate in one honorary's national tournament. The following table suggests the respondents' preferences.

PREFERENCE RANKINGS FOR ATTENDING NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

TOURNAMENT	PREFERENCE RANKING 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total	
AFA-NIET	44	42	7	2	0	0	95	(40.25%)
HONORARIES	17	11	17	2	2	0	49	(20.76%)
CEDA	16	10	7	0	0	0	33	(13.98%)
NFA	11	11	7	2	0	0	31	(13.14%)
INTERSTATE O	1	3	6	6	0	0	16	(6.78%)
NDT	7	2	1	0	1	1	12	(5.08%)

N = 96

The respondents were asked to provide their reasons for deciding to attend particular national tournaments. After

listing the factors influencing their decisions, respondents ranked their factors. From these reasons ten factors were identified as reasons why certain national tournaments were attended, as follows:

(1) If/how the student qualified to participate either through a competitive process or through membership in one of the honorary organizations or CEDA (QUALPROC); (2) if funding were available to attend (FUNDING); (3) the quality of the tournament (TOURQUAL); (4) if the school traditionally participated in the tournament (TRADITION); (5) where the tournament was held (LOCATION); (6) the professional affiliation of the coach or program (PROFAFFIL); (7) the educational value of the tournament (EDVALUE); (8) the preference of the students to attend the tournament (STUDPREF); (9) when the tournament was held (TIMING); and (10) if the participant students and coaches enjoyed attending the tournament (ENJOYMENT).

The following table identifies the rankings for the reasons given for attending particular national tournaments (1 = most important reasons; 2 = next most important reason; etc.):

REASON RANKINGS WHEN SELECTING NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS TO ATTEND

REASON	PREFERENCE RANKING					
	1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total	
QUALPROC	25	17	3	2	47	(24.48%)
FUNDING	17	17	6	4	44	(22.92%)
TOURQUAL	11	7	4	0	22	(11.46%)
TRADITION	11	7	1	1	20	(10.42%)
LOCATION	6	6	6	1	19	(9.90%)
PROFAFFIL	7	4	1	0	12	(6.25%)
EDVALUE	6	2	3	0	11	(5.73%)
STUDPREF	5	2	2	0	9	(4.89%)
TIMING	2	1	1	2	6	(3.13%)
ENJOYMENT	0	2	0	0	2	(1.04%)
TOTAL	90*	65	27	10		

*Only 90 of the 96 respondents ranked their reasons for deciding to attend particular national tournaments.

To focus more specifically on the reasons why particular national tournaments were selected, a cross tabulation was conducted for each of the six national tournaments identified in this study. For those respondents preferring the AFA-NIET first, the following priority of reasons was identified based upon the total number of rankings each reason received. Available funding, the qualification procedure enabling the student to attend the tournament, and the quality of the tournament were the most important reasons provided.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING AFA-NIET FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total
FUNDING	8	7	3	1	19 (23.17%)
QUALPROC	11	5	0	1	17 (20.73%)
TOURQUAL	9	4	1	0	14 (17.07%)
LOCATION	3	2	3	0	8 (9.76%)
TRADITION	3	3	0	1	7 (8.54%)
STUDPREF	3	1	1	0	5 (6.10%)
TIMING	2	1	0	1	4 (4.88%)
EDVALUE	1	1	2	0	4 (4.88%)
PROFAFFIL	1	1	0	0	2 (2.44%)
ENJOYMENT	0	2	0	0	2 (2.44%)
TOTAL	41	27	10	4	82

N = 44

For those respondents preferring the honoraries first, the following rankings were provided. The qualification procedures used by the honoraries, the availability of funding, and the location of the tournament were identified as the main reasons why schools were in attendance at the honoraries' national tournaments.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING HONORARIES FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total
QUALPROC	5	4	2	0	11 (26.83%)
FUNDING	4	3	1	1	9 (21.95%)
LOCATION	1	4	3	1	9 (21.95%)
EDVALUE	3	0	0	0	3 (7.32%)
TRADITION	2	1	0	0	3 (7.32%)
PROFAFFIL	1	1	1	0	3 (7.32%)
TOURQUAL	1	1	1	0	3 (7.32%)
TOTAL	17	14	8	2	41

(Of those preferring honoraries first, no rankings were given for Timing, Enjoyment, or Student Preference.)

N = 17

Of the respondents who preferred the CEDA National Tournament first, the way students qualified to attend, the availability of funding, and the tradition of participating at

the tournament were listed as the top three reasons for attendance based upon total ranks given.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING CEDA FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total
QUALPROC	4	5	1	1	11 (31.43%)
FUNDING	3	3	1	1	8 (22.86%)
TRADITION	4	1	1	0	6 (17.14%)
PROFAFFIL	1	2	0	0	3 (8.57%)
STUDPREF	1	1	0	0	2 (5.71%)
EDVALUE	1	0	1	0	2 (5.71%)
TOURQUAL	0	1	1	0	2 (5.71%)
LOCATION	1	0	0	0	1 (2.86%)
TOTAL	15	13	5	2	35

(Of those preferring CEDA first, no rankings were given for Timing or Enjoyment.)
N = 16

For the National Forensic Association's IE Nationals, those preferring this tournament listed the manner in which a student qualified to participate, the availability of funding, and the professional affiliation of coach or program as the top three reasons behind the decision to attend this tournament.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING NFA FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total
QUALPROC	3	3	0	0	6 (28.57%)
FUNDING	2	2	0	0	4 (19.05%)
PROFAFFIL	3	0	0	0	3 (14.29%)
EDVALUE	1	1	0	0	2 (9.62%)
TOURQUAL	0	1	1	0	2 (9.62%)
LOCATION	1	0	0	0	1 (4.76%)
STUDPREF	1	0	0	0	1 (4.76%)
TRADITION	0	1	0	0	1 (4.76%)
TIMING	0	0	1	0	1 (4.76%)
TOTAL	11	8	2	0	21

(Of those preferring NFA first, no rankings were given for Enjoyment.)
N = 11

For the NDT, the tradition of attending this national

tournament, the availability of funding, and the manner in which a team qualified to participate were listed as the top three reasons why schools chose to attend this tournament.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING NDT FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total	
TRADITION	2	1	0	0	3	(27.27%)
FUNDING	0	1	1	1	3	(27.27%)
QUALPROC	2	0	0	0	2	(18.18%)
PROFAFFIL	1	0	0	0	1	(9.09%)
STUDPREF	0	0	1	0	1	(9.09%)
TIMING	0	0	0	1	1	(9.09%)
TOTAL	5	2	2	2	11	

(Of those preferring NDT first, no rankings were given for Location, Tournament Quality, Educational Value, or Enjoyment.)
N = 7

For the one respondent who preferred attending the Interstate Oratory Contest first, the quality of the tournament and the availability of funding were listed as the two reasons supporting this preference.

REASON RANKINGS FOR THOSE PREFERRING INTERSTATE ORATORY FIRST

REASON	REASON RANK 1st	2nd	3rd	Other	Total	
TOURQUAL	1	0	0	0	1	(50.00%)
FUNDING	0	1	0	0	0	(50.00%)
TOTAL	1	1	0	0	2	

(Of those preferring Interstate Oratory first, no rankings were given for location, Timing, Educational Value, Enjoyment, Qualification Procedure, Tradition, Student Preference, or Professional Affiliation.)
N = 1

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The research questions in this study addressed the issues of prioritizing national tournaments and identifying the factors influencing the choices made by coaches and/or program directors

when deciding which national tournaments to attend.

The Prioritizing of National Tournaments

Upon reviewing the findings of this study, the "halo" effect may have been operative. The respondents were attending the AFA-NIET, had responded to the survey questions while at the tournament (or within the week following the tournament), and clearly identified their preference for the AFA-NIET by giving 44 most preferred and 42 next most preferred rankings. A similar result occurred when testing the instrument at the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament where the PKD tournament received the highest number of most preferred and next most preferred rankings, followed by CEDA, the AFA-NIET, NFA IE Nationals, NDT, and Interstate Oratory. Despite the apparent bias on the part of the respondents; for this population, the ranking of national tournaments still provides useful information for the researcher who seeks to understand how a given population regards the other "national" tournaments.

To further probe the preferences of this population, an effort was made to determine if regionality (based upon the districts of the AFA-NIET) might make a difference in choice of national tournament selection. The following rankings, by district, were identified for the six national tournaments included in this study.

PREFERENTIAL RANKINGS FOR ATTENDING NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS IDENTIFIED BY DISTRICTS OF THE AFA-NIET

Tournament	Districts of the AFA-NIET 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Rank
AFA-NIET	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
HONORARIES	4	2	2	2	3	2	5	3	3	2
CEDA	2	3	3	5	5	3	2	4	2	3
NFA	5	4	4	3	1	4	3	2	6	4
IO	6	4	6	4	4	6	5	5	5	5
NDT	3	4	5	6	6	5	4	5	4	6

The AFA-NIET received all but one of the first place rankings. However, the table suggests that rankings by district did not correspond with the final rank for each national tournament. This leads to the premise that the decision to attend a particular national tournament may have been based upon different reasons or preferences for particular national tournaments as identified in the districts of the AFA-NIET.

The Reasons for Attending National Tournaments

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the national forensic honoraries were the only groups to host national tournaments. The fraternal nature of these organizations stressed not only competition, but active membership, friendship, educational values, tradition, and enjoyment. While funding, location of the tournament, and quality of the tournament were factors influencing participation, these variables were downplayed to the respective memberships of the honorary organizations. However, when reviewing the reasons why particular national tournaments were attended in 1989, these reasons were not ranked among the most significant by those most preferring the national tournaments sponsored by honoraries.

A COMPARISON OF REASON RANKS BETWEEN ALL RESPONDENTS AND THOSE PREFERRING THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS SPONSORED BY THE FORENSIC HONORARY ORGANIZATIONS

POPULATION RANK	REASON	THOSE PREFERRING HONORARY
1	QUALPROC	1
2	FUNDING	2
3	TOURQUAL	7
4	TRADITION	5
5	LOCATION	3
6	PROFAFFIL	6
7	EDVALUE	4
8	STUDPREF	9
9	TIMING	10
10	ENJOYMENT	8

What this table suggests is that for those preferring the national tournaments of the honorary organizations, the manner of qualifying was as important a consideration for them as it was for those preferring the other national tournaments. Membership in the honorary organization constitutes qualification for participation at the national tournaments. For the other national tournaments, specific qualifying requirements must be met in order to participate. The absence of a competitive qualifying procedure for the national honorary tournaments may be the basis for some of the claims that these national tournaments are of a "secondary status" when compared with the other national events. However, it is not uncommon for schools to have students do well at the national tournaments of the honoraries as well as the other national tournaments (Hawkins, 1989).

Funding also ranked as a major reason why certain national tournaments were attended. It should be noted that while 96 respondents indicated they attended at least one national tournament, 79 responded that they attended two; 45 attended

three; 12 attended four; 3 attended five; and 1 attended all six of the tournaments included in this study. Clearly, funding may limit participation; but for the schools at the AFA-NIET, there appeared to be a commitment to support more than one national tournament. In addition, for those 17 respondents preferring the national tournaments sponsored by the honorary organizations, there was an indication that their schools also attended at least two additional national tournaments.

Only the professional affiliation of the coach and/or program shared a similar rank. None of the other reasons shared the same rank. The grouping of reasons in the lower half merits discussion. Tradition, professional affiliation, enjoyment, student preference, and even educational value should be the critical areas upon which membership in the national forensic honorary organizations is based. If not for tradition, ties to the national honorary organization, the enjoyment and preference of the student, and educational value of competition, the claim can be made that the national honorary organizations are not unique, and in fact, are just like all the other forensic organizations sponsoring national tournaments, sans a competitive qualification procedure.

To identify any regional differences for the reasons why particular national tournaments were preferred, the following table identifies (by district of the AFA-NIET) the ranking for each reason.

RANKING OF REASONS FOR SELECTING NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS AS IDENTIFIED BY DISTRICTS OF THE AFA-NIET

Reasons	Districts of the AFA 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Mean	Rank
QUALPROC	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	1.5	1
FUNDING	2	6	1	2	3	1	2	3	2	2.4	2
TOURQUAL	3	4	3	3	-	4	-	-	3	3.3	3
TRADITION	5	1	4	9	6	6	-	2	4	4.6	4
LOCATION	4	7	5	4	2	3	-	-	8	4.7	5
EDVALUE	7	3	7	5	5	-	-	-	5	5.3	6
PROFAFFIL	7	-	7	6	-	5	-	1	7	5.5	7
STUDPREF	6	4	9	6	4	-	-	-	5	5.6	8
TIMING	-	-	6	8	-	-	3	-	-	5.6	9
ENJOYMENT	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	9	9.5	10

Based upon those ranking reasons for selecting particular national tournaments; the qualification procedure, the availability of funding, and the tournament's quality were viewed as the top three reasons why attendance at particular tournaments was preferred.

Due to the number of respondents from Districts 1, 3, 4, and 9 (accounting for nearly 73 percent of the total) from California, the Lower Mississippi Valley, the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Southwestern United States, the conclusions of this study may reflect the preferences of coaches from these geographic areas of the country. The following table identifies the respondents by districts of the AFA-NIET. Despite the weight in favor of preferences from these regions, the data provides a unique picture of factors that influenced those who attended the 1989 AFA-NIET.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY DISTRICTS OF THE AFA-NIET

District	Respondents	Percentage of N = 96
1	19	19.8%
2	7	7.3%
3	20	20.8%
4	19	19.8%
5	4	4.2%
6	7	7.3%
7	3	3.1%
8	5	5.2%
9	12	12.5%

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The national forensic honorary organizations and the "national" tournaments are related. Each national tournament provides opportunities for students to excell in the art of competitive speaking. Whether individual events or debate or both, national tournaments should continue to meet the needs of the students and coaches who choose to attend them.

The role of the national forensic honorary has changed in the forensic community. Other than seeming to put the educational value of the tournament experience above the tournament quality, the national forensic honorary organizations did not appear to reflect a set of preferences that was different from the population as a whole. The national honorary organizations no longer compel participation from their members. Despite the continued presence of Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, and Phi Rho Pi, the nature of their national tournaments has been altered by the presence of the AFA-NIET, NFA IE Nationals, NDT, CEDA, and Interstate Oratory Contest. With such a menu of competitive national tournaments, the forensic director might well be confused as to which national contests are

"the best" or "most important" to attend.

Perhaps what this study suggests is the preference of the program directors, rather than the students' preferences. While program directors usually determine which national tournament the contestants from a school will attend, the study also suggests that student preference and enjoyment are not considered to be important factors when deciding which national tournament to attend. This should be a fundamental concern to educators who believe that forensic competition should be for the benefit of students. If student preference and enjoyment are low on the list of reasons why program directors choose to participate at national tournaments, what does this say about the activity? Do coaches choose to attend particular national tournaments for the prestige that tournament affords the school or forensic program? Do the low rankings for student preference and enjoyment reflect an assumption that the students enjoy any national tournament experience?

Future research needs to focus on the attitudes of coaches and students regarding the national competitive forensic experience. Has the forensic community become too competitive? Have the number of national tournaments contributed to this increasingly competitive point of view? What role do the national forensic organizations play in influencing the attitudes of their subscribers?

Other national forensic organizations should undertake similar studies of their memberships to determine which national

tournaments are preferred and the reasons behind these preferences. Learning more about these preferences may enable future leaders of the forensic community to improve and shape the nature of their national individual events and debate tournaments.

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